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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

MFG. 11-70

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 INFO OCT-01 PM-05 L-04 AID-28 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-08
 NSAE-00 P-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 SFW-02 INT-06 IO-13
 RSR-01 /105 W

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 FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1180
 INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: VENEZUELA/COLOMBIA: GULF OF VENEZUELA DEFINITIONS

REF: CARACAS A-565 OF OCTOBER 16, 1970

1. FRONT PAGE EL NACIONAL CARRIES TODAY TEXT OF FONMINISTRY COMMUNIQUE ISSUED YESTERDAY ON DEFINITION OF GULF OF VENEZUELA TERRITORIAL WATERS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF COMMUNIQUE WHICH IS BEING POUCHED ALONG WITH ACCOMPANYING DIAGRAM OF CLAIM TO VENEZUELAN DESK AND EMBASSY BOGOTA:

"IN VIEW OF REPEATED STORIES IN COLOMBIAN PRESS AFFIRMING THAT POSITION MAINTAINED BY VENEZUELA FOR DEFINITION OF TERRITORIAL SEAS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES IS PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THESE AREAS BASED ON LENGTH OF COASTLINES, OR SYSTEM CALLED PROPORTIONALITY, AND ALSO BECAUSE OF FACT THAT COLOMBIAN FONMINISTER, HIS EXCELLENCY ALFREDO VAZQUEZ CARRIZOSA, HAS STATED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT COLOMBIAN THESIS IS MEDIAN LINE, VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, WITH PURPOSE OF PROPERLY INFORMING PUBLIC OPINION OF COUNTRY, DEEMS IT NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THAT THESIS HELD BY VENEZUELA, WITH RESERVATION THAT THIS QUESTION MUST BE DECIDED DEFINITELY BY SOVEREIGN CONGRESS OF COUNTRY IN CONFORMITY WITH CONSTITUTION, IS POSITION OF A DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN

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COLOMBIAN COAST OF THE GUAJIRA AND VENEZUELAN ISLANDS OF LOS MONJES COMBINED WITH A LINE OF DEMARCATION THAT FOLLOWS DIRECTION OF LAND FRONTIER, BECAUSE AREAS DEFINED BETWEEN VENEZUELAN COASTS ARE TRADITIONALLY AND HISTORICALLY VENEZUELAN WATERS."

2. COMMENT: STATEMENT AND DIAGRAM CARRIED IN PRESS CORRESPOND TO DIAGRAM SUBMITTED IN EMBASSY A-565. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, VENEZUELAN POSITION ON PROPORTIONALITY IS ONLY FOR PURPOSES OF NEGOTIATING QUESTION OF DIVIDING UP CONTINENTAL SHELF IN AREA BEYOND 12 MILE TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT OFF COLOMBIAN COAST, BUT SHORT OF MEDIAN LINE. PROPORTIONALITY HAS NOT IMPLIED VENEZUELA IS PREPARED TO RELINQUISH A PERCENTAGE OF THE GULF SEAS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF BASED ON PROPORTION DERIVED FROM COLOMBIA'S HOLDING APPROXIMATELY TEN PERCENT OF COAST LINE IN GULF.

3. IN CARRYING SAME STORY FRONT PAGE TODAY, EL UNIVERSAL ALSO ALLEGES THAT PRESIDENT CALDERA YESTERDAY IN HIS MEETING WITH COPEI PARTY LEADERSHIP PROPOSED CREATION OF A BROAD NATIONAL FRONT OF OPINION CROSSING PARTY LINES THAT WOULD SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN DEFENDING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IN DISPUTE WITH COLOMBIA OVER TERRITORIAL SEAS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF.

GP-4.

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